



10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

14 February 1989

Dear Mr. Salem Azzam,

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 30 January. We too are anxious that the innocent victims of this war should not suffer further as a result of food supply problems. We are watching developments closely and keeping in touch with the international and UN agencies involved. These agencies, in particular the United Nations Co-ordinator for Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan, provide the best means of ensuring that assistance is delivered effectively where it is needed. I hope that if you are not already co-ordinating your efforts with them, you will consider doing so.

Last week, with the worsening situation in Kabul in mind, we donated a further £500,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNICEF specifically for mother and child programmes. We have already donated £10 million this financial year for Afghan refugee relief, including £6.75 million to UNHCR and £1.5 million to the ICRC. Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1980, we have contributed £60 million towards humanitarian aid programmes for the victims of the conflict.

I entirely agree with you that the establishment of a stable government in Afghanistan is of prime importance. The present regime was illegally installed and armed by the Russians against the will of the Afghan people. It cannot survive. The bloodshed and suffering could halt tomorrow if it stepped down voluntarily and allowed the Afghan people as a whole to choose their own government through a genuine act of self-determination.

Yours sincerely,
Charles Powell

(C. D. POWELL)

Mr. Salem Azzam